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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DPC 248

ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, FRIDAY,  
NOVEMBER 16, 1962, 12:23

MR. REAP: We have two releases for you. First, let me explain that Linc is giving a talk out at St. Louis today. He will be back with us on Monday. There are two releases.. Earlier this morning we gave you Press Release No. 678, the address by Mr. Ball before the Eighth Annual Parliamentarians' Conference in Paris. This was for release at ten o'clock this morning. And Press Release No. 680, which is the itinerary of the Prime Minister of the Somali Republic.

Q What is his name, Joe?

[Laughter]

A I have the press release here. That is all that I have.

Q What is the State Department's reaction to the Castro threats just made public?

A What?

Q The Castro threat that any American surveillance plane flying over Cuba will be shot at. What are--

A You mean--is this in the letter that was

presented?

Q To U Thant.

A No, I have no comment on the letter of Mr. Castro to U Thant. However, we have made clear that as long as offensive weapons remain in Cuba that we under the OAS resolution will continue our air surveillance.

Now, on a background basis, let me say generally that I cannot comment on the various aspects of the Cuban matter, since, as you know, there are negotiations going on at the United Nations, with the Secretary General, with the Soviets, and of course we still have not heard--

Q Of course what--Joe?

A We have not yet heard about Mr. Mikoyan's visit, mission to Cuba.

Q Well, apparently Castro doesn't feel himself restrained by these talks going on in New York. What do we intend to do to defend our surveillance planes?

A Well, Mr. Sylvester made some comment on that, Endre.

Q When, Joe?

A This morning, I understand.

Q Have we sent planes over this morning?

A I am sorry, I don't know.

Q Did Mr. Sylvester comment at all upon the story printed in the Miami news that Washington had

received hard information that there were still missiles in Cuba?

A I don't know whether Art has commented on that or not, but let me say on background, before I got in here last night I think Mr. Manning commented on that. What did he say?

MR. BISHOP: He said on the record it was absolutely false.

A Mr. Manning last night said that was absolutely false.

Q Joe, what is the United States attitude on the passing of the U Thant deadline for negotiations between Katanga and the Central Congolese Government?

A I better not comment on that, John. I am just not prepared.

On a background basis, let me say that <sup>that</sup> "deadline" is a very vague thing, and I am not sure just whether that was intended to be a deadline.

Q Is there anything yet on George McGhee's discussions?

A No. Mr. McGhee got back, I think last night it was. It would be premature for me to comment on Mr. McGhee's mission, since his urgent consultations are continuing as a part of this Government's constant effort

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progress is made in the general organization of Europe, etc.

Are you saying now that this is coming down to the stage where we can go ahead with direct planning for it? Or is it still somewhat in the future?

A Not quite. I have said that there is no fire-alarm situation here, because we think we have the general nuclear situation, as I said, pretty well in hand. But as you get closer to European integration, you do get a somewhat larger degree of interest on the part of the Europeans.

So I'd say it's moving along slowly. It's not something which is in a great rush, in which we expect immediate concrete action very soon.

Q Thank you, Mr. Popper.

Q Thank you, sir.

MR. REAP: I was asked earlier for some reaction to the Cuban complaints about surveillance. I'd like to make this statement:

Surveillance of [redacted] Cuba has been conducted for the reasons stated by the communique of the Ministers of the American Republics on October 3. I quote from that communique:

"To prevent the secret accumulation in the

island of arms"--

Q In the islands plu-

A In the islands plu-

there are several islands ~~are used for offensive purposes~~--"in the islands of arms that can be used for offensive purposes against the Hemisphere."

The crucial importance of the surveillance for the peace of the Caribbean was demonstrated by the events of October. All efforts to obtain better means of observation and verification in Cuba have been so far rejected by the Castro regime. Until such better means are available, individual countries--

Q Such better means?

A Until such better means are available, individual countries of the Hemisphere must take whatever steps are necessary to guard against threats to their peace and security.

Q This means surveillance can be kept up indefinitely, Joe, until there is a better means of verification?

A Precisely.

Q What was the question?

Q This means the surveillance can be kept up indefinitely until there is a better means of verification.

Q Does this mean some other country is going to join us in this surveillance? It mentioned individual countries, in the plural.

A No. I will stand on the statement there.

Q Thank you.

Q Wait a minute. Where does this leave your previous statement? You are suddenly bringing in the communique. In your previous statement, you refer to the OAS resolution of October 23.

A If you prefer, I think this might supersede the earlier one.

[Whereupon at 12:50 p.m., the meeting was concluded.]

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